

Request for Proposal (RfP)

Travel Agency Services January 30th, 2024

1. Context

EIT Manufacturing is focused on promoting entrepreneurship, innovation, and education in the domain of Manufacturing. EIT Manufacturing brings together leading organizations along the entire value chain from smaller companies to larger industry, excellent academic and research institutions, as well as public sector organizations, to promote the transformation of manufacturing towards the digital economy, towards the circular economy and the decarbonization of industry, by removing barriers to innovation, promoting talent and education, leveraging enabling technologies and exploiting big data.

EIT Manufacturing is an association under the law 1901 created in 2019. Along with the EIT Manufacturing there are 8 (eight) other Knowledge Innovation Communities (“KICs”) with the aim to lead the action and create services across Europe, improving the competitiveness of European companies.

EIT Manufacturing is currently searching for an experienced external service provider to take care of its travel service’s needs.

2. Service Description

EIT Manufacturing is seeking for a qualified and experienced travel company to submit proposals for our travel, transportation and accommodation services (car, hotel, rail, airplane).

The selected Supplier will be responsible for a comprehensive range of services which will be used by our employees, directors, CEO and related personnel. The services include but are not limited to:

1) Platform for Easy Bookings:

- User-friendly platform for booking travels seamlessly.
- Multi-modal transportation/accommodation options (car, hotels, rail, airplane) integrated into a single platform with large selection of providers included.
- Transparent breakdown of costs associated with each trip with advantageous in-system price offers provided.
- Easy access to detailed cost information for both employees and administrators with clear service price catalogue available, containing options of where to find how much the agency charges for each of the services (ex: changing a flight, etc.).



2) Travel Policy:

- Adherence to your organization's travel policy.
- Customization options for tailoring policies based on destinations and employee's subsidiary (invoicing entity).

3) Approval Flow:

- Clearly defined approval workflow for travel requests, when needed, including multiple levels of approval's for EITM.
- Ability to customize the approval processes, if necessary, «including the possibility to set bookings to always require, to require in certain conditions and to not require approvals.

4) Invoices & Payment Methods:

- Automated invoicing system for easy processing and tracking.
- Compatibility with our organization's financial systems.
- Possibility to invoice company/pay bookings by SEPA (IBAN) preferred over card payments.
- Capability to handle invoices from different entities or subsidiaries (possibility to include several subsidiaries as invoicing entities in the system).

5) Project Number/Cost Center Inclusion:

- Inclusion of Project Number (or any specific requirements) in the booking process.
- Compliance with all relevant regulations and standards.
- Ability to allocate costs to specific cost centers or entities with the possibility to indicate a secondary cost center when needed.
- Seamless integration with your organization's cost tracking system.

6) Analytics for Different Invoices:

- Detailed analytics on different types of invoices (car, hotel, rail, airplane).
- Visual representation of travel expenses for better decision-making.
- Generation/Issuing of separate invoice for each user.

7) Reports Tracking:

- Robust and clear reporting features for tracking travel expenses, trends, and compliance.
- Export functionality for easy integration with your organization's reporting tools.



8) Trail Tracking:

- Comprehensive trail tracking for all travel-related activities.
- Real-time updates on the status of travel requests and bookings.

9) No Restrictions Inside Europe:

- Assurance that the travel agency covers all European destinations without restrictions.
- Flexibility in choosing transportation/accommodation options within Europe (car, hotel, rail, airplane). *(On this topic, please, specify in your proposal the suppliers with whom your company is not working with. For example, mention if your company does not collaborate with railway or car lease providers, etc.).*

10) Additional Services:

- 24/7 customer support for any issues or emergencies.
- Integration with travel risk management services.
- Loyalty programs or discounts for frequent travelers.
- Mobile application for on-the-go bookings and updates.
- Sustainability initiatives in travel options.

11) Security and Compliance:

- Implementation of robust security measures to protect sensitive information.
- Compliance with data protection laws and regulations.

The proposals submitted in this RfP must inform the maximum budget, subject to the potential supplier's exclusion from the procurement process.

If additional work is required, it will be requested by the EIT Manufacturing in writing upon agreement with the supplier.

The above list is a comprehensive guide, and specific activities may be further tailored based on the unique requirements of the engagement to be established between EIT Manufacturing and the Supplier.

3. Timeline

The deadline to submit the offer is **01/03/2024** and the awarded tenderer shall provide the Services as described in this RfP until the expiration date of the contract.

The indicative timeline for the call for proposals is as follows:

Activity	Responsible	Date
RFP opening	EIT Manufacturing	30/01/2024



Offer submission	Supplier	01/03/2024
Evaluation and notification of award	EIT Manufacturing	04/03/2024
Contract signature	EIT Manufacturing & selected supplier	14/03/2024

All offers shall be submitted within the above-mentioned deadline to the following email: procurement@eitmanufacturing.eu

4. Evaluation Criteria and Award Notification

Timely received proposals submitted by the tenderers will be examined, evaluated, and compared in accordance with the following criteria and the contract shall be awarded to the highest ranked tenderer. The decision will be made according to the “Best Value for Money” principle. The award criteria will be the following:

- a) Price (Best Value for Money) (30%)
- b) Prior and reputable experience in the field (20%)
- c) Technological Suitability including the existence of a user-friendliness of the platform, compatibility with existing organizational systems, and the ability to integrate with financial and reporting tools. (20%)
- d) Transparency and Cost Management meaning the provision of good trail tracking, cost breakdowns, and overall visibility into service costs, allocation of costs to specific entities, and clear reporting. (30%)

An Evaluation Committee of 3 people will be established. Each bid will be evaluated and ranked according to the criteria above.

The compliance with the principles of transparency, non-discrimination, equal treatment, and absence of conflict of interest will be ensured.

The successful and unsuccessful tenderers will be informed in writing (via email) about the result of the award procedure. In case the winning tenderer is unable to enter the contract, EIT Manufacturing may decide to contract the supplier receiving the second highest ranking.

Upon request from the tenderer concerned, EIT Manufacturing will as quickly as possible, and in any event within 15 calendar days from receipt of a written request, inform:

- any unsuccessful candidate of the reasons for the rejection of its request to participate,
- any unsuccessful tenderer of the reasons for the rejection of its tender, including, if this is the case, its decision that the works, supplies or services do not meet the performance or functional requirements,
- any tenderer that has made an admissible tender of the characteristics and relative advantages of the tender selected as well as the name of the successful tenderer or the parties to the awarded contract,
- any tenderer that has made an admissible tender of the conduct and progress of negotiations and dialogue with tenderers.

Information referred to above may be withheld where the release of such information would be contrary to the public interest, would prejudice the legitimate commercial interests of an economic operator, or might prejudice fair competition between economic operators.

Should there be a suspicion that the provider will not be able to perform according to the price offered, EIT Manufacturing has the right to ask for explanations and may reject the tender where the evidence supplied does not satisfactorily account for the low level of price or cost proposed.



Complementary Note on the Evaluation Process:

After the initial evaluation of submitted proposals, it is possible that the potential top-ranked suppliers may be shortlisted for participation in a Pitch Session or in a set of interviews. It is important to emphasize that the evaluation will be conducted in strict accordance with the criteria outlined in the published Request for Proposal (RfP).

The primary objective of the Pitch Session or Interviews is to facilitate a deeper understanding of the received proposals, provide an opportunity to elaborate on specific details, and allow the EIT Manufacturing to get to know the team of professionals better. During this session, the shortlisted suppliers will have the chance to present their proposals, clarify any questions, and discuss how your firm can best meet the needs of EIT Manufacturing.

Further details regarding the Pitch Session or Interviews, including dates and logistics, will be communicated to the shortlisted suppliers following the initial evaluation of proposals.

5. Complaint procedure

Tenderers believing that they have been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may file a complaint. Appeals shall be addressed to EIT Manufacturing **only** via the following email address procurement@eitmanufacturing.eu. The tenderers have **10 (ten)** days to file their complaints from the date of receipt of notification of the results.

In your application to EIT Manufacturing the complainant shall explain what procedural aspects they consider having been violated along with any recommendations or remarks. Such charges need to be supported with data and facts and, if possible, – documentation. An appeal whose sole purpose is to obtain a second evaluation for no reason other than that the complainant disagrees with the final award decision is to be rejected.

6. Negotiations & Clarifications

Negotiations can be held in the following cases:

- if it is identified that the scope of services issued by EIT Manufacturing is not detailed enough, incomplete or some areas are lacking crucial information to complete the procedure for direct awards;
- if EIT Manufacturing has the intention to reduce the offered prices to find the best value for money;
- if all submitted prices are above the planned budget and it is everyone's interest to finish the procedure with success – in that case, price negotiation can take place. During a price negotiation, all tenderers are called to lower their prices by the same deadline in a written form.

EIT Manufacturing can organize as many rounds of negotiation as it is needed during the procedure in order to reach the highest quality of proposals and the best price.

Whenever possible, the negotiations should be carried out in writing, however, in special cases, video conference or even live negotiation can be organized. EIT Manufacturing also reserves the right to invite the tenderers to an individual meeting before the final award of contract in order to clarify details and ambiguities.

In case of obvious or perceived errors or omissions in the RfP, Tenderers can request additional information or clarifications by the deadline provided in the above timeframe through email at procurement@eitmanufacturing.eu.

Upon receipt of the bids, they will be reviewed, and additional details will be requested from the tenderers as needed. The requests as well as the answers are to be submitted written by e-mail. Where information or



documentation to be submitted by tenderers is incomplete or erroneous or where specific documents are missing, EIT Manufacturing staff may request the party concerned to submit, supplement, clarify or complete the relevant information or documentation within 3 day(s).

Bid preparation costs are not reimbursable and must be borne by the tenderers.

EIT Manufacturing owns all bids received in this RFP. Proprietary information of vendors in the bids will be kept strictly confidential. The offers as well as the contract may be submitted for audits.

7. Contract

The final award does not yet constitute the Contract. The Contract will be concluded at the time of signature by the Supplier and EIT Manufacturing. The winning supplier will be sent the contract to be signed (indicating the deadline by which the signed contract should be returned to EIT Manufacturing).

The invoicing will be based on a mutually agreed schedule; it will be detailed in the contract. The contract is estimated to be signed by March 2024, and will have a maximum duration of **1 (one) year** with the possibility of renewal by mutual agreement between the parties.

The tenderer agrees that the total value of the contract to be signed with EIT Manufacturing for the mentioned period will in no way exceed the bid (the amount contained in the offer) of the tenderer.

The awarded supplier will be requested to sign Standard Contractual Clauses (SCC) if no other GDPR compliant safeguards exist, and the supplier is located in a country for which the EU commission has not issued an adequacy decision.

8. Confidentiality Obligation

All information, whether written or oral, exchanged between the parties involved in this Request for Proposals (RfP) process, hereinafter referred to as the "Parties" shall be considered confidential and proprietary.

The Parties agree not to disclose, provide access to, or otherwise make available any confidential information to any third parties, including but not limited to individuals, companies, or organizations, who are not directly involved in the RfP process, without the express written consent of the disclosing Party.

"Confidential Information" shall encompass, without limitation, all data, documents, proposals, discussions, designs, specifications, financial information, technical data, trade secrets, and any other information disclosed by one Party to the other during the course of the RfP process.

The obligations of confidentiality shall not apply to information that is:

- a) Publicly available at the time of disclosure or subsequently becomes publicly available through no fault of the receiving Party.
- b) Already in the possession of the receiving Party prior to disclosure and not subject to an existing confidentiality obligation.
- c) Disclosed to the receiving Party by a third party with the legal right to do so without breaching any confidentiality obligations.
- d) Required to be disclosed by law, court order, or governmental regulation, provided that the disclosing Party is promptly notified and given the opportunity to seek a protective order.



Any Party found in breach of this confidentiality clause shall be subject to legal measures, including but not limited to litigation, injunctive relief, and monetary damages, as deemed appropriate by the disclosing Party.

The obligations of confidentiality as set forth in this clause shall survive the termination or completion of the RfP process and shall remain in effect for a period of 5 (five) years, unless both Parties mutually agree in writing to terminate this confidentiality agreement.

This confidentiality clause shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of France. Any legal action arising out of or in connection with this clause shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of Paris, France.

9. Cancellation of the proposal procedure

In the event of cancellation of the proposal procedure, EIT Manufacturing will notify tenderers of the cancellation. In no event shall EIT Manufacturing be liable for any damages whatsoever including, without limitation, damages for loss of profits, in any way connected with the cancellation of a proposal procedure, even if EIT Manufacturing has been advised of the possibility of damages.

The tenderer shall take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the contract is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests'). The tenderer should inform the EIT Manufacturing team immediately if there is any change in the above circumstances at any stage during the implementation of the tasks.

The supplier cannot be a EIT Manufacturing Partner or Activity Partner. Any bid from such an economic operator will be rejected.

Tenderers will be excluded if:

- a) they are being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations; they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of *res judicata*.
- b) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the EIT Manufacturing can justify.
- c) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or any other country of the EU.
- d) they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization or any other illegal activity detrimental to the EU' financial interests.
- e) following a procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the EU budget, they have been declared in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations.

The tenderers must not be in a situation of a conflict of interest, and they have sufficient economic and financial capacity, technical and professional capacity and legal and regulatory capacity to perform the requested services. Additional evidence or declarations might be requested by the contracting authority.

EIT Manufacturing reserves the right to suspend or cancel the procedure, where the award procedure proves to have been subject to substantial errors, irregularities, conflict of interest or fraud. If substantial errors, irregularities, conflict of interest or fraud are discovered after the award of the tender, EIT Manufacturing may refrain from concluding the Contract.



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This RfP confers no entitlement or expectation for tenderers to enter into a contract with EIT Manufacturing. Consequently, EIT Manufacturing is not obliged to sign a contract with the chosen supplier, whether at present or in the future.

